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# ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON

## Mr. THO. CHUBB'S DISCOURSE on MIRACLES,

Considered as EVIDENCES to prove the divine  
original of a Revelation.

Wherein is attempted to be shewn,  
That he has greatly mistaken the *kind* and *degree* of  
evidence—that his *hypothesis* is not consistent with  
itself; and so unable to overthrow, or even *weaken*  
the evidence given to the *Christian Revelation*, by  
miracles, if so applied.

To which is added,

An APPENDIX, containing Dr. TURNBULL'S  
Queries, which are humbly offered to the serious conside-  
ration of all who pretend to be FREE-THINKERS.

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*Is there no such thing as truth, because the question has been  
put, What is truth?*

*Is there no such thing as right reason, because men have  
maintained infinite absurdities and contradictions about every  
thing?*

*Have not some that pretend to be mathematicians disputed about  
the first principles of geometry?*

*In short, what is there that minute philosophers have not held,  
to the subversion of human knowledge, and destruction of  
all science?* Dr. SYKES's Connexion, &c. p. 285, 286.

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By CALEB FLEMING.

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Page 44. read Line 25 before Line 24.

T O

Mr. T H O. C H U B B.

## The INTRODUCTION.

S I R,

**I** Have with care attended to your *Discourse on Miracles*, and as far as I know myself, have animadverted upon your *hypothesis*, with that impartial regard to Truth, which becomes a lover of it.—You have well observed, “that *controversies* in matters of *religion*, when managed with “that *fairness* and *good humour* as they ought, have “this advantage arising from them, that they give “occasion for men’s reasoning faculties to be exercised with much more *care* and *attention* than “otherwise they would be. Which *fairness* and “*good humour* in controversy, greatly tends to check “and restrain the growth of bigotry and superstition, which through men’s *inattention* are apt to “prevail in the world.” I likewise agree with you, in thinking, “that the points controverted, are likewise very often set in a much *clearer* light by this “means, and the way to truth rendered more *easy*, “by a removal of those *difficulties* and *objections* “which are bars to men’s receiving it.”

FARTHER, I own myself of the number of those who wish “that all restraints upon men’s enquiries “were removed, and that all men were at *full liber-*

“ ty to offer their thoughts and their objections *freely*  
 “ upon every question with which religion is con-  
 “ cerned ; this being most *fair* and *equitable* in itself,  
 “ and likewise, the most *sure* and *certain* way for a  
 “ religion which is *well-grounded*, to be generally  
 “ received, and thereby, to be more thoroughly  
 “ established.”

THIS part of your preface, Sir, I could not forbear transcribing, as it expresses the sense I have of *religious liberty* ; and am fully persuaded, that should we separate this *extent of freedom* from our Idea of religion, and the method of promoting and propagating it, we must have a very *jejune* and *starved* notion of it ! Religion being in its own nature a *personal* thing ; nor can bear any *compulsion* or *restraint*. The understanding must have sufficient light for conviction ; the object of knowledge must appear so amiable and worthy of regard as to engage the affection and choice, otherwise, it is not religion but something else. *Besides*, as religion imports the *sense* which the creature has of obligation to his Maker ; to recommend or attempt to promote it, by throwing in *temporary rewards* or *discouragements*, is to divert the mind from regarding that obligation in which religion consists ; it does this, as it is a making the *creature*, and not the CREATOR, the object of religious regard.

BUT when we are pleading in behalf of *Liberty*, and *Truth*, it will be required of us, that we use *great care* and be very *circumspect* lest we betray any sort or degree of falsehood in our own words or actions. Whether you have not unhappily transgressed the laws of Truth, in asserting, p. 5. of your preface, *that you have taken a view of the subject considered simply in itself, without any view or regard to any particular revelation, or to any particular miracle, wrought, or supposed to be wrought, in favour of the divinity of any revelation.*—Whether there be not some *excess* in this declaration, I shall appeal to your own

own breast, by setting before you some passages in your *Discourse on Miracles*.—Pray turn to p. 15, 16, 17. and observe how you have attempted to shew we cannot prove, that *the raising a dead person to life, is a work above the natural ability or inherent power of any created being*—you have done this, not barely by asserting, that *a skilful surgeon or physician, by a timely interposition has sometimes prevented death, by removing a disorder which otherwise would speedily and unavoidably have ended in it*—and that sometimes, by a timely and proper application from a skilful person, life has been restored after a short cessation; but you have added, an exprefs reference to the history of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage; where we have an account, that the magicians, by their enchantments, that is, (as it is commonly understood) by a power derived from evil spirits, turned their dead rods into serpents, that is, into living, active beings, which serpents are known and allowed to be.

FROM this you have reasoned, and have declared, that if we admit, as true, what is recorded, as done, by the magicians of Egypt, in turning dead rods into serpents, then the probability will be on the affirmative side of the question.

NOW if this IVth Section stands for any thing, or be allowed to be a part of the *Discourse on Miracles*, then you have not taken a view of the subject considered simply in itself, without any view or regard to any particular revelation, or to any particular miracle wrought, or supposed to be wrought, in favour of the divinity of any revelation.

PERHAPS it may be replied, that you have not violated or broken your word; forasmuch as the magicians turning their dead rods into serpents, was neither a miracle, wrought, or supposed to be wrought, in favour of the divinity of any revelation.

I GRANT it; and yet imagine, you have not taken a view of the subject considered simply in itself; but must have recourse to the credit of the Sacred

History, for supporting your consequences, which are drawn from the *magicians* turning their *dead rods* into serpents.

AGAIN, be pleased to turn to the narrative you have taken out of *Lacy's* book, entitled, *A Cry from the desert*, from p. 83 to 87 inclusive; and observe what use you have made of it:—you must own, that you have opposed the evidences of that pretended Miracle to the evidences of *Christ's resurrection*; and must be understood, by any reader who would understand you, to prefer the testimony given by *Ca-valier, Fage, and Marion*,\* to *Simon, Andrew, and Philip*, and the circumstances attending those miracles in the *Sevennes*, as rising higher in their demand of credit than those attending the history of *Jesus*; inasmuch, as in the former case, the records were made within four years after the facts were transacted.—The fact, *i. e.* the grand one mentioned in *Lacy's* narrative, is of such a nature, p. 88. as seems to be above, and therefore not the produce of JUGGLE or SLEIGHT of hand. The miracle was performed before a great number of witnesses, by computation not less than one thousand. These witnesses were persons who suffered persecution for the sake of their religion; persons who were eminent for their great piety, or, at least, for their being frequent in those exercises which are made the outward signs and tokens of it; persons of reputed honesty and integrity, and who could not possibly have any worldly advantages—who lived under a Government that greatly opposed that NEW DISPENSATION they were believers in, and that NEW MINISTRY they attended upon.—Again, its

\* N. B. It is pity but Mr. Chubb had carefully examined into the nature of this pretended miracle, and shewn the resemblance it bore to any of those said to be wrought by *Jesus* or his Apostles. It is pity but he had shewn how this power of working miracles continued among the *French Prophets*, so called; and how remarkably they risked the truth of their revelations in the affair of *Emmes*, who was to rise again from the dead, on such a day foretold to their disciples.

being

being *seen by many*, p. 90. done before *many witnesses*, p. 91. These things compared with your introducing the particular fact of Christ's resurrection, though you have introduced it from a book called *The Trial of the Witnesses*, yet the use you have made of the fact and the evidences attending it, in comparison, or rather in *contrast*, will lead any careful reader to conclude, that you have not taken a view of the subject considered simply in itself, without any view or regard to any particular revelation, or to any particular miracle, wrought, or supposed to be wrought, in favour of the divinity of any revelation; unless great part of this XIIIth Section has nothing to do with your *Discourse on Miracles*.

I NOW proceed to animadvert upon some parts of your argument.

## S E C T. I.

*Upon the definition given of a miracle, and miracle-worker.*

T H E R E are some things under the head of miracles, and under that of revelation, which I apprehend are no way clear or conclusive.

I O W N with you, that a miracle expresses a sensible effect which is above the natural ability, or inherent power of man to cause or produce, p. 2. But that no miracle can be an evidence of the DIVINITY of a man's message, except the power exercised in working the miracle be revealed to, and foretold by that man, that such an effect will take place; for otherwise, it would not appear that the miracle was related to one man, or to his message, more than to another; and consequently, not to any man; and therefore, it could not be an evidence in the present case, p. 4. this I deny. For a miracle may be appropriated to one man, in distinction from any and every other person, though he should not foretel that such an effect would take place: for instance, should there be such an immediate

ate and evident connection between the visible action of a person, and a miraculous effect, as that of *Moses's* striking a rock, and upon his doing so, the waters gushing out; men would easily appropriate the miracle to *Moses*, and not to any other man. Or was there so evident a connection between a man's speaking a word, and the miraculous effect, such as *JESUS* saying to the stormy winds and raging waves, *BE STILL*; and a calm instantly succeeds! any person present would readily apply the miracle to *Jesus*, though he had not foretold the miraculous effect.—*Nay*, to put the matter yet farther, *Mr. Chubb's* definition is so far from being just concerning the *criterion* of a miracle-worker, that there is no necessity that the miracle-worker should so much as either speak or act, in order to determine the miraculous effect appropriate to him; for instance, should *Jesus* be surrounded with a crowd of people, and a *diseased* woman should privately touch his garment, under a strong persuasion of his divine mission and power, and should upon that touch *instantly* find herself in full strength and vigor of body; would there in this case be any difficulty in ascribing the miraculous power of healing to *Jesus*.

THUS it is proved that *Mr. Chubb's* account of the necessary *criterion* of a miracle-worker, viz. *that of foretelling the miraculous effect*, is not necessary to distinguish him.

NOR can I by any means allow *Mr. Chubb's* farther account of this sort of evidence; for he says, in that same place, *as miracles are here considered as EVIDENCES of the DIVINITY of a revelation; and as divine revelations are delivered to the world by the mouth, or pen of some man; so no miracle can be an evidence of the divinity of a man's message, except the power exercised in working the miracle, be subject to the man's will, as to the exercise of it; or, at least, except it be revealed to, and foretold by that man, that such an effect will take place, &c.*

IF Mr. Chubb means by the *miraculous power* being subject to a man's will, as to the exercise of it, its being *so* subject to his will, that he can apply it or direct the application of it either to attest *truth* or *falsehood*, or to procure the *good* or *hurt* of the creatures around him, I then beg leave to differ from him; nor do I see how Mr. Chubb's definition can upon his own scheme be supported. He owns p. 33. " that  
 " there is a natural and essential difference in things,  
 " and that one thing or action is really *better* or *preferable* to another in nature—that there is a rule  
 " of action resulting from that difference, which every moral agent ought in reason to govern his  
 " actions by; and that God as the Governour of  
 " the intelligent and moral world makes the reason  
 " of things the rule and measure of his actions, in  
 " all his dealings with his creatures, and this renders  
 " him absolutely and perfectly *wise* and *good*:"—now should we suppose that the power exercised in working miracles was *so* subject to a man's will, as that he could direct the application of it to a *false* as well as to a *true* doctrine, to an *evil* as well as to a *good* purpose; such a power of working miracles could not, in the nature of the thing, evidence the *divinity* of a man's message: because we must suppose, that the Governor of the intelligent and moral world makes the reason of things the rule and measure of his actions, in *all* his dealings with his creatures, and that he is *absolutely* and *perfectly* wise and good. So that the power of working miracles cannot be subject to a man's will so as to be directed in the exercise of it, either to attest falsehood, or promote evil: it cannot, if it remain an evidence of the *divinity* of a man's message.

PERHAPS Mr. Chubb might have made a much better definition of a miracle, had he attended to that same history with care, from which he has his account of the *Magicians rods*. The true *miracle-worker* there, he would find to be *initiated* in this very principle,  
 viz.

viz. that the *miraculous effect* had nothing at all to do with his natural capacities or his freedom of agency. I would refer him to *Exod.* iv. 1, 2, 3, 4. where he will find “ that *Moses* is commanded to cast down  
 “ his rod, God causeth it to become a serpent. *Mo-*  
 “ *ses* was so surprized that he fled from the face of  
 “ it: a plain proof that his *free-agency* had nothing  
 “ to do in it. Nay, so far was he from exerting a  
 “ miraculous power *ad libitum*, that he exerted no  
 “ miraculous power at all, except Mr. *Chubb* will say  
 “ that it is a miracle for a man to cast a rod or a  
 “ stick out of his hand.”—*Besides,*

AN effect wrought, that is *above the natural ability* and *inherent power* of man, don't seem to be reducible to that *kind or degree* of power and capacity which is requisite to his *moral agency*; forasmuch, as it is above the *natural ability* and *inherent power* of man. This carries the idea of miraculous power beyond the man's grasp; and determines it to be a *foreign* influence or force. The *inherent power* being too impotent and scanty to wield and govern the miraculous power, will determine the man who is said to work the miracle, to have neither *freedom* of agency or of volition in the miraculous operation *itself*.

AND yet, was it requisite, in order to a man's being said to *work a miracle*, that it may be made known to him that such a quantity of extraordinary power shall be exerted; which *knowledge*, is to be signified by him, in *foretelling* that such an effect will take place?—

SUPPOSING this, should such a Man declare that the *quantity of power* was his *own*, and that it was absolutely under his direction, it would be no more a proof of his *message* being divine, than any operation within the compass of his natural abilities and inherent powers would be. The extraordinary effect produced, if in attestation of a *divine doctrine*, or of a *revelation from God*, must have the proper marks  
 of

of its being a divine power : or it will have nothing in it, that is suitable to the nature of such evidence. Thus we find the *Historian* recording the divine commission given to *Moses* ; and in that, informing him, that the *reason* or *end* of the miracles that should be performed, was, *that the Egyptians might know that JEHOVAH, or the King of Israel was God.* And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, *when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt.* Indeed this revelation to *Moses* would not have stood for any thing if there had been no *signs* appointed to be used by him, which might direct the Egyptians to consider the miracles wrought, as standing related to him, and performed in confirmation of his message being from God. He is therefore directed to say to AARON, *take thy rod and cast it before PHARAOH, and it shall become a serpent.*

HE is ever to enforce his message, as a *divine* message—and *thou shalt say unto him, i. e. to Pharaoh, the LORD GOD of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee.* And in support of this, the idolatrous people were to have miracles wrought, which should demonstrate the *finger of God*, or the power to be from God. So evident, we are told it was, that the *magicians* themselves acknowledged it.—Nor could *Pharaoh* and his *Servants* be under any temptation to think that these miraculous effects were produced, at the absolute pleasure of *Moses*, or of any being below God. To convince them that they were the operations of *Jehovah*, *Moses* is commanded to stretch forth his hands towards heaven, and accordingly, *stretches forth his hands toward heaven* ; directly and openly addressing the fountain of all power.

## S E C T II.

*Farther thoughts upon the extent of humane ability : or upon the criterion of a Miracle-worker.*

**I**T is of little avail that we are so solicitous about how far the natural abilities of man extends, which is the subject of Mr. Chubb's II<sup>d</sup> Section ; for, he says, that this seems to be a difficulty too great for humane understanding to surmount, p. 11.

AND he tells us that should a man *rise up and move through the air, to the height, and with the swiftness of an eagle ; or if he should command a mountain to remove out of its place, and to stand in the mids of the sea, and it should be removed accordingly, this would be just ground of presuming that those effects exceeded the bounds of humane power ; because as this is greatly superior to any power which has yet appeared to be in man, so from hence arises a high degree of probability, that it is above the natural ability of mankind ; and there is no probability but only a bare possibility, if that, of the contrary,* p. 12.

THIS extraordinary concession deserves some notice. It seems that for a man to move through the air to the *height and swiftness* of an eagle ; or to remove a mountain, and place it in the midst of the sea, at a word of command, is a *just ground* for presuming that those effects exceeded humane power !—If these be properly a *just ground of presuming*, I wonder what would be requisite to carry it to demonstration ! It is true, Mr. Chubb afterward says, that an *high degree of probability*, arises from this *just ground for presuming* ; nay, allows, there is *no probability*, but only a bare possibility, if that, of its not exceeding the bounds of humane power. But surely, unless Mr Chubb has formed the most romantic ideas of the extent of man's natural ability, he

he must conclude such effects of power, CERTAIN proof of its exceeding the limits of humane power. I am persuaded that should any man tell Mr. *Chubb* that it came within the verge of his *natural ability* and *inherent power* to remove a *mole hill* or a *turf* from one field to another, only by virtue of speaking a word, or commanding it to remove; he would look upon such a man with contempt; and condemn him as a *fool* or a *madman*. Nor do I know of any man of common sense, but what would treat the pretension with *ridicule*. To determine this, *viz.* whether the *natural ability* or *capacity* of man can extend to the removing of a mountain and placing it in the midst of the sea, is not a difficulty *too great* for humane understanding to surmount; forasmuch, as it would be a *most certain* proof of a *sort* of power not inherent in humane nature.

THERE are *criteria* enough of effects wrought, being *above* the compass of humane power: such as turning a *dry stick*, or a *dead* (or rather an *inanimate*) *rod* into a living creature, in the form and figure of a serpent; as was the case with *Moses* and *Aaron*: and the raising a man from the dead: curing the diseased, the lame, the dumb, the deaf, and the blind, with a word speaking—which have been done; nor is there any thing appears to the contrary by this whole *Discourse on Miracles*, drawn up with all the care and art of which this *Gentleman* was master.

IT may indeed be objected, that, for any thing which appears to the contrary, *wicked* men may have been employed, as well as *good* men in working miracles, as attestations of the divinity of a mission or doctrine.

IT does not seem to me a clear point from revelation that any wicked man, ever did work a miracle during his prevailing regard to vice. Men might be miracle-workers whilst they retain a moral temper and conduct, and afterwards turn

wicked: but so pure and holy was the source or origin of miraculous power, that men by becoming immoral, *did quench the spirit*. So that integrity and honesty of mind seem all along through the *New Testament* History requisite both to the miracle-worker, and to the persons relieved by such extraordinary exertion of power. From hence it appears very improbable, that any *real miracle* should ever have been wrought, to *delude and injure*.

BUT supposing they have been wrought by wicked men, it does not, *abstractedly* considered, appear inconsistent with the nature of a real miracle; the *effect* produced being well adapted to the *end* it was designed to answer. *As for instance*, supposing [as Mr. Chubb once supposed; by St. James's account] that *Elias* was a *passionate, angry* man; or let us suppose him to have been a *wicked* man, it would not have proved that the miracle wrought by him, was not well adapted to decide the controversy between him [considered as commissioned by *Jehovah*, the God of Israel] and the priests of *Baal*. And it was not only well adapted to prevent the people's *halting between two opinions*, so opposite, but we find they were actually convinced by it. *Besides*, the message a man delivers, as from God, and attests by a miracle, is not the less a *truth*, for, or on account of the man's being a wicked man; inasmuch, as Mr. Chubb will own, *that a vicious invisible Being may act contrary to his general character; and do good in some instances; and that this is manifestly the case among men*; p. 53.

IF the person who wrought miracles had taught this, *viz.* that he wrought those miracles in testimony of his own *divine original*, or that he in a most *singular* manner came from God, or was approved and owned of God; even *so* approved and owned of him, that he claimed the relation of a *Son* to him, and called God his *Father*; then it would be every way requisite that his *whole moral character* should perfectly

perfectly agree with the known perfections of God : for, if in any branch of moral truth or virtue he appeared *defective*, no expression of power would sufficiently prove his *extraordinary* mission and claim.

IN all other cases, the working of miracles, or the being able to signify that such and such extraordinary effects should be produced, does not stand strictly connected with the indefectible *moral* character of the person, who is thus recommending a doctrine, as divine. It will therefore be no matter of wonder should we find in *history*, the most excellent men [at the same time they were commissioned to work miracles] declaring a *possibility* of their being *rejected* of God ; of their *finally failing* of the approbation of the Great Judge ; and discern them placing the *qualifications* for happiness, not in a miraculous faith, that could *remove mountains*, or, in the most *extensive knowledge* of the secrets of nature, but in *moral temper and conduct*.

HAD any, who have wrought *real* miracles, ever pretended this to be a part of their *virtue*, or what entered into their moral character, there would have been room to have doubted of the *divinity* of their pretensions ! but when this was so far from being the case, that none ever pretended to be the real *efficient*, or to work *in his own name*, but always to derive the power from the Being to whom he was appealing, and from whom he received his *credentials* ; no deception, of any kind, could attend such miracles : forasmuch, as both the miracle itself, and the truth attested by it, must be worthy of God, or could have *no* claim to divinity.

## S E C T. III.

*Of the capacity of invisible agents to work miracles ; in which is shewn, that a real miracle cannot be wrought in attestation of falsehood.*

**G**R E A T pains has been taken by Mr. Chubb to shew how many difficulties attend our judging of miracles, as, in truth, attesting a divine revelation. For, as to the degree and kind of power created beings are capable of exercising, we are in the dark, and must leave this point under the same uncertainty that we find it. For as invisible agents are beings which we are perfect strangers to, so the kinds or degrees of power which may arise from their natural constitutions, are what we have no possible way to discover :—and that it is equally as easy for God to communicate one kind or degree of power as another, at least, for any thing we know or can shew to the contrary, p. 14.

T H E R E can be no more than mere supposition in this, since, in Mr. Chubb's III<sup>d</sup> Section he asserts, that to know whether there are any other invisible agents but God, which can, or at least, which do, act upon this globe, is a task exceeding difficult—that there is no argument to be drawn from the revelation in the present argument—that it remains an undetermined point, neither the affirmative nor the negative side to be taken—But notwithstanding all this, most part of what follows in his *Discourse on Miracles* has to do with the operation of invisible agents, considered as good or bad !—It would take up too much room to mention one half of such reasoning : and inasmuch, as the most perplexing articles of the whole scheme, seem to be built on the hypothesis of invisible agents being able to impose upon man, and delude him : I should imagine, that whoever attends to Section III. must see that Mr. Chubb's hypothesis has not the least foundation : forasmuch as he excludes all argument drawn from

from revelation, and declares the operation of invisible agents upon this globe, to remain with him an *undetermined point, neither the affirmative nor the negative side to be taken.*

WHY should Mr. Chubb entertain the world with *chimeras* and *whims*, such as, upon his own confession, are so ; things about which he has no *Ideas* ; and not only so, but make these *fictions* to enter gravely into the argument, and to stand, as difficulties that will embarrass and lessen the degree of *probability*, in the evidence of real miracles ?—Let any careful reader, but attend to the repeated declarations Mr. Chubb has made of our *ignorance about angels*, of whom he says, p. 47. *we know nothing about them*—let him but strip off all the harangue, and then, if he can, make any thing of what remains of this *hypothesis* :—*especially*, when he adds to this, a farther declaration of Mr. Chubb's, viz. that we are not only in the dark, as to the operation of other invisible agents, acting upon this our globe, BUT IT IS A QUESTION WHETHER GOD HIMSELF DOES INTERPOSE, *since prevalency of power cannot be a proof of its being divine*, p. 15.

If this be the true state of the case, all the questions put, I should think very trifling ; for example, such as the following, viz. *Whether God will suffer invisible agents to exert their power for the delusion of his creatures ? All invisible agents being at liberty to exert their power in serving what purposes they please.*—Upon the supposition that there are such invisible agents, this will appear very improbable that they should at all interpose, it being a question *whether God himself does interpose* ; unless their concern and influences may be supposed to be more extensive than God's.—But upon the supposition that neither God nor any other invisible agent does interpose, *as we are entirely in the dark about both* ; then the question here put, *is quite needless.*—And upon this needless, usefess,

useless, aerial foundation, the greatest part of Mr. Chubb's *hypothesis* stands.

IT seems to be a general mistake, in this *Writer*, that a *real interposál*, such as should arise to the true nature of a miracle, must express *nothing but power*. This seems to be the sentiment here, it being the reason assigned, why it is not likely God should himself EVER interpose, *since prevalency of power cannot be a proof of its being divine*.

BUT, give me leave to ask, whether a *divine interposál* may not express something else besides power? may it not discover *wisdom* also? nay, *compassion*, and *fatherly goodness*?—Mr. Chubb will own, that *God is the common parent of his creatures, and the natural guardian of their happiness*, p. 38. and may not an *extraordinary exertion* of his power, bear the complexion of a tender parent? and being in attestation of some *scheme of favour* to men, may it not also, have the marks of *truth* and *veracity* in it; detecting falsehood, discovering deception, and restoring to just Sentiments and Ideas of his once *disputed* Sovereignty and Dominion? If so, then we have no need to rest *only* upon prevalency of power for the proof of any miracle's being from God; but such other features may be stamped upon the miracle, as shew it to be genuinely divine.

BESIDES, as *God is the common parent of his creatures, and the natural guardian of their happiness*, it is no way improbable but that he may have shewn himself to be so by *extraordinary interposals*, at such times, and in such circumstances, which would render such extraordinary interposals capable of giving the most conspicuous display of his adorable character; and recommend his name to the *reverence, fear*, and *trust* of his creatures.—

THERE is a mighty fine distinction made about *Truth*, as opposed to error, and to falsehood; *which Truth opposed to falsehood, only becomes good or evil by the purposes it is made to serve*, p. 58.

AND

AND this is in order to shew, *that there may be some extraordinary cases in which it may be fit for virtuous invisible agents, not to have a strict regard to truth*, p. 54.

BUT should any virtuous man pretend to an express commission from God, or to an immediate revelation, who at the same time knew he had no such thing, and Mr. Chubb was capable of discovering the fallacy of this pretension or claim, I am of opinion, that whatever *end* the man might have in view, Mr. Chubb would scarce know how to form any consistent notion of the *virtue* of this *impostor*, or imagine him acceptable either to God, or even to those *men* who knew of the deception; the *end* would be hard put to it, to sanctify the *means*; or the man be able to convince a reasonable Being, that he was a *worthy* messenger of the God of Truth.

AND if we suppose a *superior* Being, to have a proportionally superior knowledge of the *nature* and *dignity* of the divine rule and government, we shall be tempted to think, he must much more abhor so *daring* an attempt, as to *forge*, as it were, the BROAD SEAL of heaven, in order to promote the acknowledged sovereignty of it. Would not this look like *defect* and *weakness* in the divine rule? That the kingdom of Truth, would need the supports of falsehood and imposture.

MR. Chubb has expressly denied that we know any thing about the power of invisible agents, and yet he begins the *wild chase* with introducing the *raising of a dead person to life*, as a work *not above* the natural ability or inherent power of a created Being, p. 15, 16.

HIS argument is this, *the animal life* (as appears to us) *has a connection with, and dependence upon a body fitly organized, and stored with juices, and those juices in a proper motion, &c.* So that if some of the principal parts of the machine are thrown into any great disorder, or if the juices are let out, or stag-

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nate,

*nate, or the like, then a cessation of life will ensue, except some speedy remedy be applied—p. 15.*

I CONFESS I do not like the *et cætera*, placed at the end of those *few* things on which the animal life depends. I wish he had mentioned *all* those things which it appears to him to depend upon. He obliges me to add,—It most evidently depends upon the *animating spirit* or *providence of God*.—The humane Family have generally acknowledged this, even such as have had no express revelation, have thought themselves, TO BE THE OFFSPRING OF GOD—which contains in its idea, that in him we *live*, and *move*, and *are*. So that the fit organization of the body, and its being duly stored with juices, and those juices continuing in proper motion, depend on the invisible hand of the Almighty Former: And who is it that should have a *right* of continuing or discontinuing life, but the Author of it? He, who gives the first moment to the blood and fluids, and has so wonderfully contrived the almost infinitely complex machine.

THE power either of *continuing* or *restoring* animal life, cannot then be within the compass of the *natural ability* or *inherent power* of any created Being: unless, the obligations of dependence for *life* and *being* can belong to any other but God. More especially, must this be denied, since such capacity is supposed to be under the direction of a creature, as a *free agent*! [i. e. in the scheme of Mr. Chubb] a *prerogative* manifestly too high for the creature.—

HOWEVER, this Gentleman produces some instances, in support of his argument. He says, *death has been prevented by a skilful surgeon or physician interposing, when death otherwise would speedily have ensued—and in some instances, life has seemed, at least, to have been restored*, p. 16.

BUT what does this prove? only in the former case, that God does not extraordinarily interpose to preserve lives, where the means of such preservation may

may be had—and that in the latter case, there may have been a *disappearance* of all the symptoms of life, for a short season, and after that, a revival. Had Mr. *Chubb* said that life had *actually* been taken away, and the person *really* dead, and after this, *restored* to life by the *physicians* or *surgeons*, it had been more to the purpose. But for my part I never heard of a *physician* or *surgeon* who when fully persuaded that a person was really dead, [if his character was that of a rational, judicious man] would pretend by his *art* to recover life. Nor did any ever pretend to understand the *first principles* of it; much less, how to *reinstate* them.—

HAD this ever been the case, some good-natured physician or other, would certainly have given a specimen of his skill, by preserving his own life in order to have preserved the life of his friends, or have taught mankind how to have banished *mortality* out of the humane family.—

THE instance of the *magicians* by their *enchantments* turning dead rods into serpents, p. 17. will not in the least perplex the doctrine of miracles. Supposing it was *commonly understood*, that they derived this power from evil spirits; this does not arise to any degree of evidence that they did so. The historian says no such thing: and if he had, that would have proved nothing against the doctrine of miracles, forasmuch as he reports them, not as *real* miracles, but as *deceptions*. The *Egyptian wise men* and the *sorcerers* which *Pharaoh* called, *Ainsworth* observes, to have been such, as by *changing the form of things into another hue, bewitch the senses and minds of men*; \* the Hebrew word *cashaph* signifying, *men artful in deception*.—These *wise men* and *sorcerers* did so with their *enchantments*; i. e. with their *secret sleights* and *jugglings*, by *secret* and *close conveyance*—altering the *medium* of vision; disturbing the air, glistering like a flame of fire, or a sword, wherewith

\* On Exod. vii. 11.

men's eyes are dazzled.—So the Greek word *βασανισμα*, rendered *bewitched*,\* signifies light falling with *too great* a glare on the eyes ; which shew the eyes to be *injured* and not *helped* by the light.—And so the word *forcery*, has in the Greek, *φαρμακεια*,† which signifies the *art of poisoning by deception*.

BESIDES, the story of the Egyptian *magicians* exactly tallies with their names and character. For whether they did those wonderful *feats* from the progress they had made in the art of deceiving the eye, by *juggle* or *legerdemain* ; or whether some invisible evil beings did assist them, it is apparent they performed *no* real miracle. Their being said to *do in like manner* with their enchantments, is only expressive of their deceiving the eyes of *Pharaoh*, and of his servants. Nor could they carry the mimicry in one single article throughout. Instead of this, the *historian* informs us, that AARON'S rod, *swallowed up their rods*.

AND when they had pretended to turn the water into blood—and likewise brought frogs ; so conscious were they of their mimicry being *all deception*, that they could not engage to remove these plagues, which they knew were *in reality* brought by *Moses* and *Aaron*. But *Pharaoh* supplicates the real *miracle-workers*, to beseech the LORD, in whose name, and by whose power, these *effects* were produced, to remove them ; which he would not have done, had it been in the power of his *magicians*.

THE removal of them, by *Moses* and *Aaron*, after these *jugglers* had been unable to do any thing towards it, *seems* to have put them so much out of countenance, that upon their attempting to use their *enchantments*, in bringing lice ; they *blundered* in their attempt, were *confounded*, and constrained to own, that the miracles wrought by *Moses* and *Aaron* were real miracles. And lest *Pharaoh* should have any the least room to imagine his *magicians* were capable of

\* Gal. iii. 1.

† Rev. xviii. 23.

doing any true miracle, they are smitten with the *boyl*, so that they could not stand before *Pharaoh*.

UPON the whole, if these MAGICIANS did so CHANGE and DISPOSE the particles of matter which constituted a dead rod, as that they became an organized body, stored with juices, in a proper motion, and could do whatever was farther necessary to render that dead rod, a LIVING, ACTIVE BEING, p. 17. then I infer, that there is a strong probability, that it was within their inherent power, to rectify the disorders occasioned by the *boyl*, and not to have lain any time under that calamity. Especially, as it is most evident, p. 24. that delusion does take place, so it is alike evident that God must permit and suffer it, whilst there are such things as free creatures in being. But to proceed,

THE raising of a dead person to life, is an effect plainly above the natural ability or inherent power of any creature whatsoever: and must be so, if there be ONE first cause, the fountain of life and being; the sovereign arbiter and disposer of it.

IT is no manner of objection to this, that men have been empowered to raise the dead: forasmuch, as all who have done so, have ever applied to the origin of power either immediately or mediately; and have ever confessed the effect to be the produce of almighty power. Nor is it possible, in the nature of the thing, that this power by which the dead are raised, can be so under the direction of a man's will, as to the exercise of it; nay, or be so in subjection to the will of any being whatsoever, as to be applied in attestation either of truth or falsehood, or for the production of good or evil. To suppose this, would be to subject the Deity itself to the caprice and humour of the creature; and render the unchangeably wise and good being, mutable and inconsistent in his operations: A conclusion, which can by no means be allowed by Mr. Chubb, who declares, that God, as Governor of the intelligent and moral world, makes the  
reason

*reason of things, the rule and measure of his actions, in all his dealings with his creatures, and this renders him absolutely and perfectly wise and good* — It will therefore follow, that though invisible agents, are beings which we are perfect strangers to, and to the *kinds* and *degrees* of power, which may arise from their natural constitutions: yet, forasmuch as God, the Governor of the world of moral, intelligent beings, makes the *reason of things, the rule and measure of his actions in his dealings with his creatures*, we may hence be assured, that he neither has, nor can communicate any such *kind* or *degree* of power, as shall confound and destroy the highest evidences of his own supremacy and dominion; and plainly contradict *the reason of things*, in his dealings with his creatures. But, this would manifestly be the case, if either men or invisible agents had such a *kind* or *degree* of power subject to their will, or which might be exerted either in testimony of truth or falsehood. And the instances of *raising the dead*, or of so *changing* or *disposing* the particles of matter, which constitute a *dead rod*, as to become an organized body, stored with juices, in proper motion, and actually transformed into a living being; are evident expressions of power that will not easily be distinguished either in their *kind* or *degree* from creative power. And if so, then I may not owe my *being* or *life* to an universal Parent, an increated Being; but to a creaturely, limited Father, whose power of forming me was absolutely under the direction of his own will! and whether a virtuous or a vicious being, I know not. So that on the *hypothesis* of any creature's being able to raise the dead, &c. by a power subject to his own will, we shall be confounded in all our ideas of obligation and dependence; and may, as probably, oppose the will of our Former by *pursuing truth*, as by *not pursuing* it. I conclude therefore from the known character of the Supreme Being, that he has imparted no such *kind* or *degree* of power, as that exerted in raising the dead,  
which

which can be so under subjection to the will of the creature, as to be applied either in support of *truth*, or of *falsehood*: for then, he would not have made, *the reason of things*, the rule and measure of his actions, in *all* his dealings with his creatures.

NOTWITHSTANDING this, I would observe, that men must have been commissioned to work miracles, even that of *raising the dead*, or else one third part of Mr. Chubb's *True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, will be in great danger of being lost, *viz.* that of Christ's assuring men that God has appointed a day in which he will most *certainly judge the world*, by him: \* by him who came to *save men's souls*: † by him who is constituted to be, not only the *sole law-giver*, but also the *sole judge* of the behaviour of his people. || This branch of Mr. Chubb's *True Gospel* will stand upon a very precarious foundation, if men have *not* been able to raise the dead: forasmuch as the *genuine* Gospel of Jesus Christ assures us, that this Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to *raise the dead*: § and his Apostles are empowered after his resurrection, to do many miracles, and even to raise the dead *in his name*, hereby attesting the truth of his resurrection, and divine mission. \*\* And this in consequence of all *power* being given him by the Father. ††—But if his Apostles did not work miracles, and raise the dead, in virtue of the commission received from him during his publick ministry: if they did not work *real* miracles, and actually raise to life the *really* dead, in confirmation of the doctrine of his own resurrection from the dead: then, his assuring men that God will *certainly* judge the world by him, has no good foundation of credit. But if we admit him to be constituted, not only the *sole law-giver*, but also the *sole judge* of

\* True Gospel, p. 40.

† p. 1.

|| p. 7.

§ Matt. x. 8.

\*\* Act. iii. 15, 16. comp. Mar. xvi. 17.

†† Matt. xxviii. 18.

the behaviour of men ; then we must allow he was actually *declared* or *determined* to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

## S E C T. IV.

*God farther vindicated from suffering such delusion.*  
 —An attempt to state witchcraft, magic and sorcery in their true light, and to shew what is to be understood by them.

**M**R. Chubb has another enquiry, and that is, *whether God will suffer invisible agents to exert such power as they have, when it is to be exercised for the delusion of his creatures? And here, if we argue by analogy, that is, if we infer from his conduct in one case, how he will act in another, then it is plain, that God will suffer invisible agents to exert their power in serving what purposes they please. Men, we see, are at liberty, and do actually delude one another, in every kind of delusion, though it be in points of the utmost importance, and for each other's hurt, and sometimes, when they have no other advantage from it, but the bare pleasure of deluding; and thus they deal with the creatures below them; and thus, in like manner, those creatures deal with one another. From whence arises a strong probability that all invisible agents (if there are any such) are at liberty to exert their power in serving what purposes they please, p. 18, 19.*

It might perhaps be sufficient to remark, that we have no authentick account of any *real* miracle having ever been wrought to attest a falsehood. Those writings which seem to claim a divine authority, mention no such delusion having ever took place. When the *Egyptian conjurers* would have aped the real miracles of *Moses* and *Aaron*, they discovered what they did to be only a *deceptio visus*: and were soon convicted of their wickedness.—Nor could any of  
 the

the *exorcists* among the Jews perform any real miracle, though they took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits (or great maladies) the *name of the Lord Jesus*. And though *seven* sons of *Sceva*, a Jew, chief of the priests *did so*, yet they felt the force of their own deception to their greatest danger and cost.\* So that if we attend to these accounts, and compare them with the reason and nature of things, we shall be led to conclude, that it is no way consistent with the moral character of God as a wise and good governor, that he should ever suffer *such deception*. I shall advert to some farther instances.

THE *wagabond* Jews exorcists, mentioned, v. 13. to have took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of Jesus, the phrase, *took upon them*, has a word to answer it, (*ἐπιχειροῦσθαι*) which signifies to move the hand *artfully*, to perform surprising things.—And the many said to have used *curious arts*, v. 19. has a word which signifies *something beside the purpose; needless, or useless* things. (*περιεργεῖν*) So *Scapula* has observed it to be used by *Aristotle* and *Plutarch*.

ALL pretensions to work miracles at the time of our Saviour and his Apostles were *detected* and *exposed*.

THE Jews did indeed charge our Lord with casting out devils by *Beel-zebub* or *Baal-zebub*, the God of flies. But says *the wisdom of God*, if I cast out devils by that impotent Idol, *by whom do your Sons cast them out?*—It was contrary to reason for any to think, *that Satan should cast out Satan*, or be divided against himself in order to support his own Kingdom.—But it was evident from our Lord's answer, that their Sons had no power of doing any real miracle, which was discoverable in the *seven Sons of Sceva*, the Jew, above mentioned; and in the *many exorcists* who brought their books to be burnt. And likewise in the case of *Simon the forcerer*, who

\* Acts. xix. 13.

*bewitched* the people of *Samaria*,\* giving out that he was some great one. To whom they all gave heed from the least unto the greatest, saying, this man is the *great power of God*. And to him, they had regard, because of long time he had *bewitched* them with forceries: which same word, rendered *bewitched*, † is applied to *Simon* himself, who beholding the miracles and signs that were done (by the Apostles) was bewitched, *v.* 13. the very same word rendered *wondered*, which before in the same context is twice rendered *bewitched*. So that the word could not import any thing more than an astonishment; a being bewildered or carried beyond the proper use of the faculties, a consternation!

AND no wonder *St. Luke* uses the same word to express the *amazement* of *Simon* upon his view of real miracles, since we find his head run giddy with the glare of them, expecting to be empowered himself to work them. A plain and strong intimation that his forceries were mere deceptions; and that the miracles, though real, had no better effect upon him, since he had the most sordid and base views, as appears by his offering money as a purchase of the *sacred impartment*.

LET us next turn to the *Old Testament*. And,

THE account given of the woman who had a familiar Spirit, or the *witch of Endor*; will by no means prove or discover the capacity of any *invisible agent*, to impose upon, and throw in any unavoidable deception. She is supposed, by some, to have had a commerce with invisible, evil Spirits; and that by their instruction, she could divine, or foretell future events. But the narrative will inform us, that it was no such thing. Nor was she able to bring up *Samuel* from the dead.

THIS will be a clear case, if the following things be attended to.

\* *Act.* viii. 9, and onward.

† *Εξίστατο*

THEY who make the supposition that a woman could be *mistress of an evil spirit*, and have it at her command, always allow, that a great degree of wickedness, must qualify for such a familiarity. And if any such qualification could be attained this way, *Saul* seems to have as large a claim to be *master of such a spirit*, as this woman of Endor, to be a *mistress of it*. He seemed fully disposed for any measures that might have rendered him as good a *wizard*, as she was a *witch*. But it was all deception; —indeed she appears to have had an artful way of speaking, as if the voice came out of the belly. Nor is this a thing impracticable; I, myself, have known a young fellow, who (pretending nothing more than to gain a penny by his art,) could so throw the sound of his voice, that it should to the nicest ear, seem to rise from the ground, to be rumbling under his hat, or to come from this or the other distant point: which *art* was probably understood by the *Pythones*, and improved by various incantations in the dark cell made use of; — a most proper place to carry on the delusion. The sixth *Isaiah* 3. speaking of them that have *familiar Spirits*; the *Septuagint* renders it, *those speaking*, (as it were) *out of the earth*;\* which agrees with the metaphorical account of the wretched condition of *Jerusalem*, ch. xxix. 4. *And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar Spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper, or peep, or chirp out of the dust. A low and base origin, that, of the familiar Spirit out of the ground—.*

AGAIN, the ingenious author of a modern piece, called *the Life of David*, has, I think, sufficiently cleared this *Pythones* from having had any hand in raising *Samuel*; whose observations appear to be grounded on the *text*, which shews, the terror she

\* Καὶ τὰς ἐκ τῆς γῆς φωνητάς.

was in at seeing *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 12, 13. —Nor could it be from any art of *Saul's*; for then, he had had no motive to have enquired after this *Pythonefs*. Neither was it the effect of any juggle or *trick*, no imaginary appearance occasioned by the power of invisible, evil Spirits; [they were incapable of raising *Samuel*] but it was the effect of *divine* power, for v. 14. the text says, and *Saul* perceived that it was *Samuel himself*; so it may and should be rendered. Upon which he stooped with his face to the ground, and *bowed himself*; says this writer, *did obeysance*. \*

THE denunciation shews it could be no impostor who gave it.† See v. 16, 17, 18, 19.

So *Manasseh* is charged with observing times, using enchantments, and witchcraft, and dealing with a familiar Spirit, and with wizards, 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 6. the Septuagint renders *witchcraft*, by a word which signifies *the art of poisoning by deception*: and the *familiar Spirit*, by a word, which expressly signifies, *speaking out of the belly*.

WHILST wickedly disposed, he chose to deal in all manner of deceptions; but when he considered and came to himself, he knew that *Jehovah* was God, v. 13.

So, it does not appear that such delusions that are in our World do ever take place, but as the mind is *indisposed* for Truth; and that the rising degrees of vice, will of themselves introduce the greatest darkness. For, as the *imagination* is furnished with all its images, from false perceptions, it is no wonder that its *fictions* are admitted, as realities.

BUT it is said, that the Jews had a law that denounced death upon witchcraft, *Exod.* xxii. 18. *Deut.* xviii. 10. The learned *Ainsworth* observes upon this last place, “ That these *sorcerers* or *jugglers* the *Hebrews* seem to have distinguished into two sorts, “ *viz.* some that did hurt, others that did hold the

\* History of the Life of David, p. 279.

† p. 283.

“ eyes,

“ eyes, that is, by juggling and sleights, beguiled  
 “ men’s senses.”

THE *reason* of the law, I think, was very plain ; for such either deluded people so far, as to lead them into some *great immoralities* ; or at least pretended to wonderful power derived from *false Demons* or *Gods*, to the subversion of the first statute law of the Jewish Theocracy.—And wherever any make use of *artful deceptions* in order to seduce others from the paths of truth and virtue, such are *forerers* and *witches*, and are unworthy a better character. Or, if any pretend to derive extraordinary or divine powers which they exert in attestation of falsehood, such may richly deserve to go under this denomination ; as they so openly insult the strong evidences, and manifest doctrine of *one* supreme, all-perfect Being.

THE above *Ainsworth* observes, that *Mecash-sheph* (the witch) *is to be stoned to death, if he do the act of witchcraft : but he that holdeth the eyes, and seemeth to do what he doth not, is to be beaten.* This he cites from *Maimony’s tract of Idol.* What there was in this *Rabbinical* distinction I pretend not to understand ; but this I think may fairly be concluded from the whole, *viz.* that men were capable of distinguishing between *witchcraft*, or any act of *forcery*, and *real nature*, or *miracles* ; otherwise, there would have been nothing to have grounded the law upon, that enacted the different punishments.

NOR would God have expressly punished witchcraft with death, had not men been able to judge clearly about the nature of it. Possibly the art of witchcraft, punishable with death, was, *their alluring virgins to prostitute their virtue, under pretence of doing honour to some idol.* For, wherever we read of men’s having or attending to *wizards*, *witches*, &c. there is always mention made of great immoralities

ralities and idolatries. So that the reason of the law is evident.

NOR only so, but God is so far from being chargeable with permitting or suffering delusions from invisible agents; that he has expressly prohibited, and made the crime capital for any *visible* ones to use arts in order to propagate *vice* and *idolatry*: and has given to all men a capacity, if they will use it, sufficient to guard against deception: which Mr. Chubb owns, p. 23. but then he says, *the generality of men are so far from using, and following their understanding in this particular, that, on the contrary, they are too apt to follow every one, who takes upon him to guide them, and are very easily misled and deluded; so that the honest, plain, simple part of mankind, are not an equal match for the more subtle and crafty. And it is in this view that man is to be considered.*

I OWN, that the *abuse of the understanding* is a very common vice; but then I should rather chuse with the SPECTATOR\* to attribute this, *to an affectation of wit and sense, as preferable to honesty and virtue; than to an affectation of being priest-ridden.* It is true however, that there are many men too subtle and crafty, for the honest, plain, and simple part of mankind. But then of what avail are those deceptions? The honest, the plain, and the simple, remaining so, are *above a match* for the subtle and crafty. Nor is it in the power of the subtle and crafty, to rob men that are plain and simple, of their *honesty*. For this would be to suppose the subtle and crafty had a capacity of destroying the *power of moral agency or freedom of volition* in men: which, I am of opinion, is not to be supposed.

BESIDES, in matters of moral good and evil, the rule of action must be discernible by every moral agent, or his accountableness cannot take place. So that to suppose the crafty and subtle can so erase the

\* Vol. I. N<sup>o</sup>. 6.

first principles of moral good, out of the minds of men, who are honest, plain, and simple, without their being capable of preventing this erasement; is to suppose, that the *honest, plain, and simple* part of mankind, may become *dishonest*, and *designing*, without blame, and without becoming accountable.—But if the crafty and subtle after all their *cunning* and *delusions* may be supposed, according to the letter of Mr. Chubb, to leave this part of mankind, *honest, plain, and simple*; I must still say, as I said before, they do not seem to be over-matched by the crafty and subtle. And then, though man be considered in this view, it will give us no disagreeable Idea of God's Government, who does not interpose so as to hinder men from being crafty and subtle.

MR. Chubb owns, p. 23. *that if men would rightly use and follow their understandings, they would be guarded and secured from every delusion, though backed with the power of an invisible agent, &c.*

WHICH fully vindicates the divine Governor in not interposing; all men having a sufficient security against delusion, and must of consequence become *criminal* if they are imposed upon. The revelation itself, where given, does not hinder men from *abusing* and *neglecting* their understanding; so that it is no impeachment of his wisdom and goodness that the revelation is not made universal, or that God does not interpose to hinder men from being *too apt* to follow every one who takes upon him to *guide* them, or that they are *very easily* misled and deluded.

ON the other hand, this arises from the freedom with which man is invested; and no measure of providence has been ever intended to offer violence to it.

MR. Chubb may throw aside his *analogy*; forasmuch as he will be able to find *no* ground of analogy from the liberty men are at to *delude* one another. They have no impartments of such extraordinary power, nor of any such *marks* of truth attending their

their delusions, as render them too specious to be detected. No man is void of a capacity of distinguishing between truth or falsehood, so far as he is concerned under the character of a moral agent. *For man is a free being who has the direction of his own actions; and as he is endowed with a discerning and reasoning faculty, which when carefully used and attended to would in the general rightly direct his understanding, his affections, and actions; (excepting in difficult and perplexed cases, in which he would be liable to err, and consequently to act wrong, and which wrong behaviour his kind Creator would not unreasonably take advantage from) so this puts it in every man's power and leaves it in his choice to behave well, or ill; to render himself pleasing or displeasing to God; and consequently, to be the proper object of divine favour, or resentment.\**

How will Mr. Chubb argue from analogy, that this being the state of man, those delusions which obtain in the world, are a reason, why God should suffer *invisible agents* to exert their power, in serving what purposes they please?

“ The *insects* or *animals*, being many of them a prey to one another, p. 20.” I humbly presume will not support the analogy, unless the *fly* and the *spider* must be supposed in these regards to be moral agents; and that the superior skill of the *spider* to the *fly*, discovered a want of goodness in the all-wise Creator.—The case of a *tyrannical Governor* is not a proper instance of God's permitting *delusion* to obtain among men, nor will it so much as destroy the *liberty* of the slave, considered as a moral agent. He can yet *approve* and *condemn* in his own mind what is right and fit, and what is not so. And even the superior *craft* of one man to another, does not seem to oblige God to interpose in the manner here contended for. What if MAHOMET had *power* and *craft* to spread a deception in the world? inasmuch as here was no *supernatural power* or *illumination* imparted to

\* See Mr. Chubb's True Gospel, p. 114.

carry on the deception, and men had been forewarned, every where, by the Christian doctrine to beware of all IMPOSTURES; and to *examine* and *try* the spirits, whether they are of God. † Since this was the case, and men lay under no disadvantages superior to the *quantum* of light and power they were possessed of, how does this support the argument from analogy?—Had God interposed by marks of *extraordinary* power, in order to prevent the spread of the deception, this could not have ascertained the end; forasmuch, *as men would yet be at liberty, whilst they are agents to exercise their natural ability, in serving what purposes they please; for take away that liberty, and their agency ceases, or is destroyed, p. 29.* And this we are told was a truth at the *first propagation* of Christianity. Men attended or not to the miraculous interposals. *Some* saw the *finger of God* in them; *others* laughed at and ridiculed them. Nor is there any ground for a comparison between the fitness of miracles in one case, as there is in the other. There is not, forasmuch as force and violence was made use of in order to propagate *Mahometanism*; when *no aid* from humane power was admitted to recommend *Christianity*. The method of propagating the one had all the marks of *imposture* in it, and therefore rendered extraordinary interposals quite unnecessary; whereas a great many external disadvantages attended the other, and therefore such tokens of divine approbation became a proper testimony.

PERHAPS *Matt. xxiv. 24.* may be objected, as intimating that *false prophets* may work miracles for the support of an *imposture*: because it says, *that there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if possible) they shall deceive the very elect.*

BUT to this I would reply, that the *signs* and *wonders* there mentioned, cannot by any means be referred to *real* miracles; but must intend *trick*, and

† John iv. 1.

*juggle*, or *mere* deception : and so belong to the nature of those *lying* or *deceptious* miracles, signs, and wonders, mentioned, 2 *Thess.* ii. 9. They indeed *artfully* performed things which astonished the people, and so made these the *standards*\* or *signs* of their commission.—But they had not the *real power*, (the *δυναμις*) which is mentioned, when the power *itself* is related in conjunction with *signs*, and *wonders*, and is *distinguished* from what it was designed to witness or testify. See *Acts* ii. 22. when *Peter* thus addresses the Jews, *Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth a man approved, or rather, demonstrated of God, among you by miracles, (δυναμεις) and wonders, and signs.*

AND so the *plea* of some who have wrought *real* miracles in the name of Christ, but who have afterwards become *apostates*, these are represented making their plea as *strong* as possible, *Matt.* vii. 22.—and in thy name have done many wonderful works : (*δυναμεις πολλας*) i. e. *many real miracles.*

NOW if the *false* Christs, and *false* Prophets could have wrought *real* miracles, as signs or attestations of their divine mission, I do not see what occasion there was, for that expression, *if possible*,† which at the same time it denotes the height of the deception, it intimates a *distinction* to be made by the careful examiner ; or, that the deception was discoverable : which it could not be, if the miracles were *real*.

NOR is it any objection, that the word used to signify a *banner*, *standard*, or *sign* of a man's *commission*, or of his family or *nobility*, is used to express the miracles which our Lord did : || forasmuch as they were evidently intended to answer this very purpose. And he all along teaches men, that the *power itself* was from God ; so manifestly from him, that he could say, *my Father worketh hitherto, and I work ;* i. e. the power is the very same ; my miracles have

\* *Σημεια*, vexillum, insigne nobilitatis. *Hedericus* de verb.

† *Εἰ δυνατον.*

|| *Σημεια.*

the very complexion of all the known and allowed operations of my Father.—

MR. Chubb's supposition of other invisible agents besides God which *can*, and *do*, at least, p. 12. [I suppose he means, which *do*, or which *can*, at least] act upon this globe, and his reasoning upon that supposition, cannot stand for much, upon his own principles, Sect. III. forasmuch, as *neither the negative nor the affirmative side of the question is to be taken for granted in order to prove any point, because nothing can certainly be concluded from either, seeing that would be to draw certain conclusions from uncertain principles*, p. 13. Besides, as we are in the dark, as to what kind or degree of power they are capable of exercising, Sect. IV. to reason and argue upon these subjects, is mere hypothesis. And so I am of opinion Mr. Chubb must also own that to be, viz. of vicious invisible agents [allowing that there are such] exerting their powers in order to recommend a scheme of truth, as divine; which seems to be the argument of p. 52, 53. compared. It is not enough to say, they are not necessarily vitious.—And it is a romantic and wild supposition, that such motives may intervene, as may become a ground or reason to them to do good in some instances, and thereby act contrary to their general character. Nor is there any thing analogous to this to be found among wicked men, though Mr. Chubb says that there is. A scheme of truth calculated to promote the welfare of mankind, is of too much importance, and must be seen to be too extensive in its tendency and influence, to become the blessing or good, which an evil or vicious being would take pains to recommend; or, exert his powers and capacities in attesting the divinity of. Forasmuch, as [upon the supposition of vicious invisible agents acting upon this our globe] we may be assured, that they would never employ themselves in thus offering the greatest violence to themselves, unnaturally subverting their own dominion; since, they must know, that every

kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. The supposition, that the most benign and friendly exertions of power in *healing*, *miraculously* healing the *maladies* and *diseases* of men, were the effects of *vitious*, invisible agents, became the mouth of a malicious, wicked, prejudiced *Pharisee*,\* much better than the pen of the *reputedly* virtuous and moral Mr. Chubb.—

AND inasmuch as Mr. Chubb has professedly owned the divinity of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, I am persuaded that he has embraced it with a confidence free from any jealousy that he may possibly have been imposed upon by the deceptions attestations of *evil* spirits. He must know, that the *Christian revelation* is, in its spirit and temper, in its whole design and tendency, *so* beneficial to mankind, that to suppose any *invisible* agent concerned in recommending it, is every way sufficient to support the *most amiable* ideas of his virtue and friendship.—Or, indeed if Mr. Chubb could suppose an *evil* invisible agent, upon some transient thought or sudden flight of fancy disposed to do good, and to promote the very *reverse* disposition to his own, Mr. Chubb could not surely imagine him any other than a *convert* to virtue: *especially*, if he should continue for *ten*, *twenty*, or *thirty* years carrying on the *god-like* design: and after the spread of this revelation, so attested, he or they concerned in such attestations, should never exert *equal* power for near 1700 years, in order to weaken its force, and to shew it was *deceptious*; something only done out of *humour* and *whim*, and not from full satisfaction and an habitual love for truth!—

THERE is then no more danger of men being imposed upon by the exertion of extraordinary power from *vitious* invisible agents, thereby recommending a *beneficial* revelation to mankind, as p. 53. would insinuate, than there is of *darkness* becoming reconciled to dwell with *light*.—

\* Matt. xii. 24.

BUT in this *Discourse on Miracles*, written by Mr. Chubb, he has given us a *sample* how men may *deceive* and *impose* upon one another: For he has laid down his *own definitions*, without supporting them; then he has made suppositions, for which, he acknowledges, he has no manner of ground or foundation; and upon these he has super-induced arguments *pro* and *con*, with a manifest design of having them applied to the *Christian revelation* and *miracles*. And in this flourish, would so deceive the eye, as to induce us to think he was in *earnest* favouring the world with stating the doctrine of miracles.

## S E C T. V.

*Miracles do not take away free agency, or offer any violence to the freedom of man: but have a beneficial tendency.*

BUT in p. 24. we are told, *that for any to say, it is morally unfit for God to suffer his creatures to delude or injure one another, is the same as to say, that it is morally unfit for God to call free creatures into being*: Which is a conclusion drawn from this proposition, *viz. Men will be at liberty whilst they are agents to exercise their natural abilities in serving what purposes they please*. Take away that liberty, and their agency ceases, or is destroyed.

IT should be first proved, that any *real* miracle has ever been wrought by any creature, in order to *delude* and *injure* other creatures, before any thing need be said to account for it—but that no miracle wrought by God himself, either for the *succour* or *punishment* of a people, has any *compulsive* power or force upon the will, to injure its freedom or destroy the self-motive faculty, is evident in the case of PHARAOH and his people, who continued to harden their hearts, and resist the demands of *Jehovah*, though attested with plagues, and then with deliverances

ances from them, upon their repentance. So that no miracle can be supposed to be wrought, that can militate *with God's bringing free agents into being*. Inasmuch then as free agency cannot be destroyed by real miracles, or the supernatural effects of divine power; an *appearance of power*, a mere shadow of it, cannot possibly destroy this *freedom*. So that in the nature of things, creatures cannot so *delude* or *injure* one another.

MEN have indeed been suffered so far to injure one another by *wounds, bruises, &c.* as to deprive of the use of reason, and so have been suffered to destroy the moral agency of such their fellow-creatures: nay, to take away their very lives. But this has nothing to do with miracles, nor with the *injury* and *delusion* arising from them. And the reason of such *permission* will be well accounted for, when Mr. Chubb's *True Gospel* has its full compass, *viz. when the appointed time comes in which God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ*.

ON the other hand, miracles have had the most BENEFICIAL effects. *Real miracles*, have been those grand events in the chronology or annals of the ages, to which we owe the highest discoveries of a particular providence, or the certainty of the special interposals of God in behalf of his creatures.

So the people of God, the children of Israel had the doctrine of a particular providence written as with a *sun-beam*, in their deliverance out of Egypt, in their being led through the wilderness; in their settlement in *Canaan*; and their security there from their surrounding enemies.

To recover the effaced notions and ideas of providence, the dominion of Jehovah was revived, in the miracle of *Elijah*, at the remarkable contest between him and the priests of *Baal*.

AND in that corrupt state of *Judaism*, which had obtained at the *incarnation* of the WORD; how manifest were the proofs of God's providence  
in

in the miracles wrought by Jesus and his Apostles? which miracles confirmed, [by giving *samples*] that very doctrine he taught, of God's extending his care to every individual who relied on his care, in the way of their duty. They, the disciples of Jesus, saw evidently the *much more*, in their being *preserved* and *protected* when sent out to preach the Gospel. They found, that if God so clothe the grass of the field, he did *much more* clothe them; if God did notice the life of a sparrow, he did *much more* notice their lives, who were employed in setting up the Kingdom of his Son in the world.

To convince them of his fatherly care and protection, they are to make no provision for their journeying, neither solicit the favour of any man by the way, *Luke x. 4.* but to rely wholly on his special providence, who had assured them of his friendly regards. And could they hear him say, *Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means, hurt you!* Could they hear this, find it true, in fact, and yet not be convinced of God's interposing in the behalf of his creatures?—or can any read the account, attend to the miracles, and not believe the doctrine of providence they are bought to confirm? The very prayer our Lord taught his disciples, and his reasoning from it, shews, the compassion of our heavenly Father to be *much more* than that of earthly parents, who will in consequence of humble and earnest supplication give good things, or the holy spirit, to them that supplicate for them.

AND *all this*, without offering the least violence to the freedom of man.

## S E C T VI.

*Another view of Miracles as giving a sensible proof of more than power.*

**B**UT it is yet said, *Miracles are direct evidences, and give a sensible proof, not of the veracity, but only of the power which attends the actor; and therefore, any other kind of evidence which may be supposed to arise from them, can be only by deduction, as it is the result of just reasoning upon the case, p. 8.*

AND Mr. Chubb has distinguished evidence into two kinds, *viz. testimony and deduction*. By *Testimony* he means, “an intelligent being affirming or denying a proposition in debate, either by speech, writing, or otherwise. And by *Deduction* is meant, when that which is brought as evidence requires our comparing of ideas, and from thence collecting or deducing the truth or falseness of the point in question.”

MIRACLES have been said, by others, as well as Mr. Chubb, to be *only* evidences of power. But this proves nothing. They seem capable of both the kinds of evidence, *viz. testimony and deduction*; and of giving a sensible proof of *goodness and veracity* as well as power. What if an *Egyptian King* disobey a message sent to him from God; and the first sensible proofs, should be *only* of power? if this King by *deduction* is brought so far to his senses, as to be convinced that the effects were wrought by the Being said to send the message, and should hereupon supplicate a deliverance from those effects of power: And if the *Messengers* should say to this King, the plagues brought upon thee shall be removed, at such a time, that thou mayest know, *that none is like unto the Lord our God?*\* Then,

\* Exod. viii. 8, 10.

the performance of this promise, by a miraculous removal of the plagues, is as direct an evidence of *veracity* as it is of power, and as sensible a proof of *goodness* as it is of either. The King and all his people can no sooner see the miraculous display of power in their *relief*, but a joyous sensation must arise from the kindness immediately felt in the interposal. And if an *extraordinary* prophet should come among men, and declare that God had sent him to be the *light* and the *life* of the world; and he should, as a testimony of the truth of what he said, give *sight* to the blind, and *raise the dead* to life again, would not this be *more* than a sensible proof of power? Here would, in these miracles, be manifest *samples* of the truth of the doctrine he taught.\* Should he declare that God had committed *all* judgment to him, and that the time is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation:—The dead actually hearing his voice in sundry instances, gives an irrefragable evidence of *truth* as well as of *power*; equally tends to conciliate the minds of men; the *samples* agreeing so exactly with the doctrine of his being the *resurrection* and *the life*. And when such a *being* has asserted, that the *end* of his mission was to *reveal* or *declare* the Father to the children of men, nothing can be more natural than to expect *moral perfections* would be displayed by him in the strongest light! and when every extraordinary *effect* which he produced had *goodness*, *tenderness* and *compassion* expressed in them, (except only *one* or *two* that perhaps gave chiefly a sensible proof of judicial *power*) then there is not *only* a sensible proof of power but also of *goodness*. And if relieving men under their *pains* and *maladies*, was expressive of compassion, then that same person,

\* See more to this purpose in Dr. TURNBULL on miracles.

whose *True Gospel* Mr. Chubb has asserted, did by his miraculous works give as direct evidences of *compassion*, as he did of *power*.

IF the *one* or *two* instances referred to, as *exceptions*, should be carefully observed, they perhaps will be thought to be evidences of *veracity* as well as *power*, and indicate the authority he was to be invested with, as *sole judge*; or that God will most certainly judge the world by him—or, that he will approve or condemn, reward or punish every man as he has, or has not conformed his affections and actions to that righteous law which is founded in the reason of things.\* So that although this *sort* of miracle comes not so properly under that *kind* of evidence called *testimony*, yet it must be allowed to come under the head of *deduction*: as in the known cases of the *fig-tree*, and the *Gadarene's swine*, to which I now have a reference.

NOR do I see, that Mr. Chubb has excluded this sort of evidence from the head of *testimony*, since he has defined *testimony to be an intelligent being vouching for, or denying a proposition by speech, writing, or otherwise*. And if so, then an intelligent being may vouch for, or deny a proposition in debate, by the exertion of power; as was the case, when the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice, in the contest between *Elijah*, and the prophets of *Baal*.†—Actions have, no doubt, a voice; and are capable of indicating something else besides the *quantity of power* expressed in them. Nay, they may give in as *plain testimony*, as speech, or writing can do: for whether is it easier to say, thy sins are forgiven thee, or to prove they are, by removing punishment or pain by an exertion of power?

ALL this *Writer* has said about invisible agents, their degree of capacity, their integrity, or the permission of God to exercise power for the delusion of his creatures, seems to be only an *ens imaginationis*;

\* *True Gospel*, p. 40.

† 1 Kings xviii. 24, 28. compared.  
for

for neither the *light of nature*, or any *divine revelation* admitted of their ever being suffered to express miraculous power in order to *delude* and *deceive* mankind. There is no one case mentioned where there was a pretence of disputing the claims of the Deity, that any thing of a *real* miracle was ever wrought in the contest, on the side of falsehood. And for my part, I freely own I am persuaded that none ever was wrought in the world. This will therefore excuse me taking notice in my next *section*, of what has been introduced under this head, which according to Mr *Chubb* is all *hypothesis*; and of which he has so fully cleared himself from believing any thing.

## S E C T. VII.

*The infrequency of miracles no proof against the doctrine of them, nor of a revelation attested by them.*

A N O T H E R difficulty about *real* miracles is put, p. 26. and onward, from their not being given so frequently as occasions require. For if *miracles* are at any time used to convince men of the *divine original of a revelation*; then, when a number of them grow sceptical and incredulous, as to the truth of those facts, and consequently are doubtful with regard to the *divinity of that revelation*; when this is the case, then new miracles become as useful, and serve the same purposes as those before, viz. to work the conviction of mankind. And it would be equally as kind and good in God to give them in the latter, as in the former case. But whereas he does not do it in the latter, this affords an argument against his having done it in the former.

P E R H A P S this reasoning may not be at all conclusive; for if there were such *reasons* subsisting at the first publication and spread of a revelation; which afterwards ceased to be reasons, then the in-

frequency of miracles will be no argument against them.

AND thus it appears with regard to the *christian revelation*, as attested by miracles. For *Jesus* taught that he came from God: that whatever he saw the Father do, those things he did likewise: that he came in his FATHER's name. It therefore became him to testify to these things by exertions of *similar power*. For these doctrines, viz. of his being *sent of God*; that he came in his Father's name—and that he had a glory with him *before the world was*; that he had *all judgment* committed to him; &c. would not have been sufficiently attended to by the Jews; no, nor *proved*, without he had wrought some wonderful works among them, to which he might appeal. Besides, their not having, during his public ministry and for years after, any records of his life and doctrine, the miracles were a *series of attestations* that became proper to employ their *attention and enquiry*, as well as become a part of those *records*, whenever they should be made. And in as much as he authorized his Apostles to recommend his religion, by working miracles *in his name*, this the person he pretended to be, both to *Jews*, became a *continued* testimony in favour of his being and *others*; the capacity of working *like-miracles* remaining with his Apostles after his ascension. A circumstance *peculiar* to the first publication of the Gospel; and which answered all the ends that were requisite, till the *sacred Records* were compleat. Nor does it appear that the power of working miracles was intended to last longer; because none but the Apostles were capable of imparting the *Charismata*. But then, the *reason* of miracles must cease, when the record and the apostolic age was finished. A series of wonderful exertions of power for *thirty* or more years having been made after the ascension of *Jesus*, nothing

thing more seemed requisite to confirm and establish the divinity of the revelation.

WHEN therefore the History was compleated, and the narratives of these miraculous exertions of power entered into the *record*, for the veracity of which, there was an appeal to the exercise of this *same kind* of power for *thirty* years ; the reason, as I said, for the repetition of miracles apparently ceased. If men will not receive a doctrine every way worthy of God, which fairly addresses the understanding, and with the noblest simplicity recommends piety and virtue, love of God and others : which gives the most sublime views of the moral character and government of God : if men will not attend to such a revelation,—*acts of power*, though the most miraculous, seem no way calculated to convince and engage. For if men will not believe in *Christ* and his *Apostles*, I mean in the writings of the *New Testament*, neither would they believe, *though one rose from the dead*.

BESIDES, they who wrought the miracles, were the *very* persons who received the doctrine from God, and who were commissioned to teach it to mankind ; it therefore appeared in the most unexceptionable light, that such *extraordinary effects* should be wrought by them, as *seals* of their mission : which reason, has never took place since the Apostles ; and as it has not, I think it no manner of proof, that because *miracles* have not been wrought since those sufficient reasons for them have ceased, that therefore they *never* were wrought, when the most apt circumstances and substantial reasons had actually a place. We have now no men among us, who have *any* claim to a divine mission, as the Apostles of our Lord had : None, who have divine, apostolical claims ; and therefore no manner of occasion for any such *credentials*. But we have writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, giving us a most *rational account* of the manner in which the Christian doctrine was first published and propagated. And the miracles recorded  
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are worthy the most *wise* and *rational* of the humane family; leave no room to suspect *delusion* and *imposture*; are all suited in their nature, as well as in the *manner* and *circumstances* in which they were wrought, to point out the doctrine which they attested, to be from God.

To *object* against the *reality* of miracles, because of the *infrequency* of them, seems quite unnatural: forasmuch, as the *frequency* of miracles would destroy the force and influence of them, upon the minds of men. Besides, the *sceptical* and *incredulous*, who refuse to receive a *doctrine* that has all the internal marks of its being from God, only because they cannot account for the *way* and *manner* wherein such miraculous impartments were made; such, would retain their *scepticism* and *incredulity*, were they to be favoured or indulged with the observation of miracles; because, their being present at the working of miracles, could no more discover to them the *way* and *manner* of the operation, than reading the *record*; nor perhaps any thing near so much:—the *surprize* and *astonishment*, rendering the mind less fit for a calm examination.—

So that all the *danger* is prevented, which Mr. Chubb in p. 72, 73. has supposed to arise from the *imagination's* being too strongly affected.

THE doctrine of Christianity has nothing in it to encourage *enthusiasm*, or inspire men with *pride* and *vanity*. There are no extraordinary impartments of power promised, none which have the least tendency to *intoxicate* the minds of men, from any special mark of being *heavenly* messengers: which indeed might become the case, if miracles were to be wrought in favour of every *sceptic* and *unbeliever*.

THE ceasing of miracles therefore upon the finishing of the apostolic age, discovers *wisdom* and *care* in preventing those objections, that a *sceptic* or *unbeliever* might make against them.

MR. Chubb, I hope, will not require the *repetition* of miracles in order to convince men of the divine original

ginal of a revelation ; since he has reported this as *part of the true Gospel*, viz. that Christ was *sent of God* ; that the *great end* and *professed design* of his coming into the world was to *save men's souls* ; and that he gave his life a *ransom* for many ; that accordingly, he is appointed the *sole judge* of men ! Since Mr. Chubb has owned these doctrines to be *true*, he himself cannot want the *repetition* of miracles to convince him of the truth of them. And methinks if the miracles ought to be repeated *once* or *twice* in every age, then the *incarnation* of the *Word*, his *sufferings* and *death*, his *resurrection* and *ascension*, should likewise be as frequently repeated ; forasmuch, as what renders the *one*, renders the *other* necessary also, or requisite.

## S E C T. VIII.

*An objection against the revelation, on account of the time of its record, considered.*

**A** G A I N S T what I have now offered, we may place Mr. Chubb's reasoning, p. 80. and onward ; where he says, *Facts may be entered upon record at the time of performance, and those records may be made so public at the time and place of action, as may not only dispose, but render it very easy for inquisitive persons who live upon the spot, to examine the case thoroughly, by examining both the record, and the evidences of the facts which are to support the credit of the record ; or the facts may be entered upon record, ten, or twenty, or thirty years after performance, and may be made public in places far distant from the place of action, or be kept as a sacred treasure in the hands of believers. The former of these very much strengthens, and the latter very much weakens, the credit of such records.*

WITH regard to the Christian Revelation, what I have already offered, may perhaps take off pretty much of the force of this objection against the strength of the evidence. It does not appear at all requisite  
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that a record should be made under the space of twenty or thirty years, (*i. e.* supposing the Apostles continue upon the spot) forasmuch, as the successive *train* of miracles, all referring to the *character* and mission of Jesus, and wrought in support of the doctrine, were a constant evidence sufficient to engage inquisitive persons who lived upon the spot to examine.

NAY, if any credit is to be given to the accounts of the antients, St. *Matthew's* record or Gospel was written within about *eight* years after the ascension, upon his leaving Judea; as Mr. *Jones* has observed, and to which I refer Mr. *Chubb*.\*—But upon the supposition that the canon was not compleated, nor so much as a Gospel among them for the space of *ten, twenty, or thirty* years, inasmuch as whilst the Apostles lived, they were capable of working miracles, the *record* was not so requisite. Moreover,

THESE expressions of power, must ever be looked upon as they really were, the expressions of *divine power*; and therefore, would discover *wisdom* and *goodness* likewise. So that the Apostles, whilst teaching the Christian doctrine, as a revelation from God, displayed all the evidences of the *truth* of it, that could render any doctrine *credible*: inasmuch as those *extraordinary effects* which they were continually producing, ever afforded the most conspicuous displays of *Deity*.

To insinuate that no *record* was entered till *ten, twenty, or thirty* years after performance; and that too not entered upon the spot, but only in places *far distant* from the place of action, is a groundless insinuation, and not to be proved. For it is allowed by good *authorities* that St. *Matthew* wrote his Gospel, in the Jews language, before he left *Palestine*. The learned Mr. *Lardner* in his *Credibility of the Gospel-History*, P. II. B. I. p. 245. tells us from *Papias*, that *Matthew writ the divine oracles in the*

\* *Jones's Canon*, Vol. III. Part IV. p. 15, 16, 17, compared.  
*Hebrew*

*Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he was able. And from Irenæus, p. 353. that Matthew then among the Jews, writ a Gospel in their language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding a church there.*

THERE was all the opportunity given for examination, that any rational and inquisitive man could desire. The Apostles of Jesus, many of them, *continuing on the spot*, where Jesus had performed all the great transactions they assert he did perform; and *myriads* of the Jews were convinced of the truth of the doctrine.

AND that no possible objection might remain against the *credibility* of the Gospel, the *records* are made before the destruction of the Jewish *city and polity*; and the prophetic account of it delivered by Jesus himself, as inserted in those records. Which prophetic accounts, were not only delivered to the inhabitants of *Judea*, but to the *strangers* scattered abroad. Too notorious were the intimations, not to have shocked the *faith* and resolution of the *believers* [supposing the records to have been kept only by them] if there had been any *fallacy* or *collusion* in the *narratives*. Nor would they have thought the treasure *sacred*, had there been any *known falsehoods* in the records.

UPON the whole, there is no history in the world can demand credit, that has been wrote before the age we live in, and which relates to facts done in a distant part of the world, if the Gospel has not *sufficient* marks of credibility. No other history can boast of being made up of *facts*, which every *wise* and *virtuous* man may see himself *interested* in, upon the supposition of their being true. Every expression of power recorded in this sacred history, evinces the divine mission of Jesus, whom Mr. Chubb owns to be the *sole judge* of men. A consideration *too extensive* to exclude any man from finding himself greatly interested in those facts.—

AND as Mr. Chubb argues from *analogy*, about *delusions* being permitted in the world, so I am tempted to think, that would he impartially attend to the account, which [what we call] *divine revelation* gives us of miracles, a great deal of his *hypothesis*, would be stripped of what is *formidable* in it.

HE would plainly perceive, that no real miracle has ever been wrought to attest a falsehood, either by invisible agents, or by men.—That upon every *pretence* of working such miracles the fallacy has been detected: witness, the Egyptian magicians; the four hundred and fifty prophets or priests of *Baal*, who *most probably*, had made use of great deceptions, in order to keep up the reputation of their *Idol*; and had persuaded the people to consent to such an extraordinary or miraculous way of deciding the controversy; which they surely would not have done, had they not been so far deluded as to imagine their God *Baal* able to defend his own character. Nor surely, would the *priests* have took so much pains to invoke him from morning till noon, and to cut and mangle their flesh in order to prevail with him, if they had not been in earnest.

AND finally, if the real *miracles* be carefully attended to, as recorded in the *Sacred Writings*, we shall find, a reason assignable for them, worthy of the extraordinary interposition. So it appears, in the affair of *Moses* and *Aaron's* delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt: they manifestly asserting the supremacy of *Jehovah*, and denying the divinity of the Gods of Egypt.—So, in the famous contest between *Elijah* and the *Priests* of *Baal*; when the King and People had degenerated from the true religion, and introduced false Gods, contrary to the known established laws of their country—and likewise, there appeared the highest reason for miracles, when the *WORD* took on him the form of a servant, and taught, *that his mission was from God*.

## S E C T. IX.

*On the Revelation not being made universal.*

**B***Y a divine revelation we are not to understand, such public revelations, as imply a divine application to the mind of each individual of our species, by which are revealed to each individual the truths intended to be made known. For though this may be called a public revelation, as it is given universally to all, yet, strictly speaking, it would be a particular private revelation, because it is given particularly to each individual. And such a revelation, whether it be considered as public or private, is foreign to the present enquiry; because the case of miracles, in our present view of them, would not come into the question.—It is only upon a supposition that a revelation of which it is said that it is divine should at any time be given or published by the mouth or pen of one man, to others, and for their use, and real miracles should be wrought by the reporter, and should be appealed to by him as evidences of the divinity of his mission; then, and in that case, the enquiry is, what kind or degree of evidence arises (not to the revealer, but to others) from those miracles, in favour of the divinity of that revelation, p. 6, 7.*

**AND** *Mr. Chubb, in opposition to the argument drawn [from the different capacities and different degrees of happiness creatures are formed for] in defence of the revelation being made to some, has this remarkable passage, p. 47. And as it was not for the sake of variety that God made so many different species of beings, but that a much greater good might be carried on thereby; so if a more general good would be carried on, by a revelation's being given partially to some, than it would be by its being given generally to all, if this were the case, then the cases under consideration would be parallel; but this does not appear to be the case, and therefore, those cases in point of argument*

admit of no comparison ; that is, there is the appearance at least of great partiality, and a defect of benevolence in one case ; whereas there is no such appearance with respect to the other.

WHAT Mr. Chubb means by saying, that it was not for the sake of variety that God made so many different species of beings, but that a much greater good might be carried on thereby ; I do not well understand.

IT is certain that *variety* enters essentially into the ideas we have of beauty. For says an *excellent Moralist*,\* “ What we call beautiful in objects seems to be in a compound *ratio* of *uniformity* and *variety* : so that where the uniformity of bodies is equal, the beauty is as the variety ; and where the variety is equal, the beauty is as the uniformity.”

BUT *besides*, “ The *variety* that there is both in the material and immaterial productions of almighty power, is the grand evidence of the efficient cause being *sovereignly free*. For power operating by the same necessity with which the Being itself does exist, must be incapable of acting by direction, or under the conduct of judgment and thought : because it is necessary in its action, and no thought can diversify it unless there be freedom in the agent, *i. e.* some principle of *suspending* the degree of its exertion, or in other cases, of extending it so, that its effects shall be more or less excellent ; for higher and lower degrees of excellency must have their reason, and that reason must immediately be in the different degrees of power ; for that alone being it which does *act externally*, from hence must be deduced the reason of diversified productions. And at the same time, the different exercise of power being from the different degrees of its exertion, those different degrees imply, both wisdom and freedom, or self-determination.”†

\* *Hutcheson's Inquiry*, &c. p. 17.

† So the worthy Mr. Jacob Ball, a MS.

WHAT shall we say then to Mr. Chubb's premises, viz. *that it was not for the sake of VARIETY, that God made so many different species of beings?*—May we but suppose the works of creation intended to display the perfections of the great Former, then *variety* being essential to beauty, must enter into the idea of the Creator; so that in some sense it must be owned, that it was for the sake of variety.—Again, Without variety no evidence could have been given of God's being a *sovereignly free agent*, without which *idea*, the sense of obligation would have been darkened, if not wholly lost; and beings produced, would not have had such reason of gratitude. For, *it was no favour in God, if he could not but thus cause my existing with such capacities, and under such advantageous circumstances: and therefore no thanks would be due to him for that I am and have.* Let Mr. Chubb now shew, how this *much greater good* stands opposed to *variety*.

WHY the revelation given to some and not to all, may not agree with this procedure of the all-wise and sovereignly free Being, I cannot discern. There seems to be no more reason to doubt of its being a divine revelation, from its being made to some and not to all, than there is of the greater degrees of natural abilities and capacities some men enjoy than others, not being from God.\* Nor is it in Mr. Chubb's power to prove, that the revelation being in the hands of only part of the humane family is not as apt a means of producing *a more general good*, as the extraordinary natural abilities and extraordinary natural light that some men have enjoyed above the rest of the humane family are to produce *a more general good*.—Why should the latter promise fairer for promoting the end than the former? The abuse and perversion of the *light of nature* has been as manifest, and as extensive as the corruptions of the *revelation*. And the *revelation* has all the marks of *good-will* to

\* See the learned Dr. SYKES's *Prin. and Connex.* p. 277.

men, when considered in its true light, that any could ever pretend to discover, in the most *eminent* disciples of the light of nature. So that for any thing that appears to the contrary, the cases under consideration are *parallel*. There is not any thing that will bear the name of *partiality* in God, either in the one case, or in the other ; but he is manifested and declared under both views to be wise, and sovereignly free. Nor is there any, the least, impeachment of his goodness ; for, the revelation, no more than the light of nature, supposes God to be an hard master : but on the contrary, with the greatest clearness asserts, *that no man shall be called to an account for more Talents than are vouchsafed him.*

THE charge against the revelation, of having the appearance, at least, of *great partiality*, and a *defect of benevolence*, is not to be supported.

THAT *third part of the True Gospel* which Mr. Chubb has acknowledged, viz. that of *Christ's being appointed the sole judge of men*, seems to have a benevolent aspect on the humane family, as it describes or implies in it, a *deliverance* from the dominion of death ; and this, in pursuance of the *divine mission* of Jesus, of his resurrection from the dead, and investiture with princely power and dominion. And would the humane Mr. Chubb have us charge God with *great partiality* and *defect of benevolence*, for having made a revelation of this, to a *part* of the humane family ? it being *incapable* of being made to all ? [forasmuch as miracles would then be *naturally* and *necessarily* excluded according to Sect. III.] So that *none* must have the notice of mercy made to them, because all could not ;—but miracles being essentially necessary to evince *Jesus* to be appointed of the Father, as *sole judge* of men, therefore the revelation could only be made to a part of the humane family.—To call this *partiality*, is unkind ; and does not at all *suit* any just idea of obligation. It would shew the eye of man to be evil, because the  
eye

eye of heaven is good: and must be owned to be, no less, *than a charging God foolishly.*—

UNDER Mr. Chubb's enquiries about the *divinity* of a revelation, he seems to have laid the stress of the objection *on its being given only to some, and not to all, in like circumstances.* And he puts this as the question, p. 65. *whether this single circumstance against the divinity of such a revelation, be of less, or equal, or superior weight, than all other circumstances which are offered in favour of that revelation.* For, says he, *the force of all that has been offered on either side of the present question terminates in this,* p. 66.

AND p. 68. he says, *the point at last turns upon this question, viz. which of those two ways of giving a revelation to the world would best and most effectually answer the purpose of such a revelation? whether by a divine application immediately to some one or more of our species, and mediately by him, or them to others, and by them, to others, and so on? and p. 69, but as this question cannot well be answered, because we are not very good judges in the present case; so it may be urged that this takes off, or at least very much weakens that objection against the divinity of a revelation, which arises from its not being given universally to all.*

IF we would have any room at all for miracles, it is plain the revelation they are to attest must not be made *universal*, i. e. *by a divine application immediately made to the mind of every individual of our own species;* forasmuch as this would render miracles useless. And if a revelation cannot be made to some one or more of our own species, and mediately by him or them to others, if it be *inconsistent* with the perfections of God to make such a revelation, then miracles themselves cannot prove any such revelation to be divine.—But, Mr. Chubb says, that to suppose God made such a revelation, *is to suppose him a perfect stranger to mankind, he well knowing how apt men*  
are

are to betray the trust reposed in them, how liable to corrupt whatever is put into their hands, to turn it to their private advantage, and to make it subservient to quite contrary purposes than what it was intended, p. 62. the question then is, whether it is likely that such a wise and good being as God is, should give a revelation; and intend it for a general good to mankind, and yet should give it in such a way, as that it will be in the power and at the pleasure of one or a few men to prevent thousands and millions of others from sharing in the benefits of it? p. 63.

ON which I remark, it seems to be evident, that if JESUS CHRIST or his *Apostles* wrought any real miracles in attestation of the doctrine they taught, then the revelation was divine, and not universal. The reality of the miracles, so applied, will prove the divine mission of Jesus, and at the same time prove, upon Mr. Chubb's own scheme, that the revelation could not be made to *all*: forasmuch as had *all* and *every* individual understood by a divine application immediately made to them, that *Jesus Christ* or the *WORD* becoming incarnate; &c. was the *Sent of God*, and appointed by him as *sole judge* of men, then miracles would have been needless. But this Mr. Chubb owns, viz. that *Jesus Christ* is appointed the judge of men; and therefore, as this could only be known by an express revelation, so the doctrine, in its own nature, demanded the testimony of miracles. And by these only, can that *third part* of Mr. Chubb's *True Gospel* be supported.

By the way, Mr. Chubb cannot take it amiss, should I ask him, “ why he believes in Christ at  
 “ all? what credentials he has to support his belief?  
 “ or, let me ask him whether a person whose doctrine  
 “ appears to be every way worthy of God, and who  
 “ affirms that he is *sent from God*, whether such a  
 “ man is the *more* or the *less* to be credited for ha-  
 “ ving his mission confirmed by such acts of power,  
 “ wisdom and goodness, which apparently claim  
 “ no

“ no other than the SUPREME BEING for their  
 “ author or origine?”—

AGAIN, the *non-universality* of the spread of the Christian Doctrine, stands in full agreement with the perfections of the Deity, and the make of man; for the very reason that man's freedom of agency can not receive any violence from the divine impartments, so the revelation could not be made universal.

THE reason will be obvious when we consider, that it was not any sort of men that were fit to be entrusted with the *Sacred Depositum*; but they were *chosen men*;—Nor had Judas any sooner become a slave to his covetousness, but he became thereby incapable of attending the business of an Apostle—And when his place became vacant in the holy college, it was supplied by their first nominating two men of the best character, and then by prayer and lots, referring it to the determination of that Being, *who knows the hearts of all men*—So that as all men were not fit for the impartment, it could not be made to all.

AN objection would indeed lie against the revelation, if it was not worthy the reception of all men, if it did not indiscriminately express the *good will* of the Deity. Nor can any one of the *favours* of God be universally received, attended to, and applied to its proper use, till all men become virtuous; till all are honest; till *truth* and *goodness* are the objects of universal esteem. But will any man from hence say, that *this* and *that* advantage vouchsafed to mankind are not from God, come not down from the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift flows? And if neither Mr. Chubb nor any other wise and sober man can deny but that the Christian doctrine or True Gospel of Jesus Christ, would be universally received, if all men were wise and good; or, that it is *worthy* the reception of all wise and good men, then its want of being universally  
 I made,

made, is no manner of argument against its divinity.—And what can that be less than of divine original, even “ the True Gospel of Christ which  
 “ provides no such *salvo*’s for sinners as would afford  
 “ ground of hope and comfort for wicked men ; but  
 “ on the contrary, it requires and obliges men to be-  
 “ come personally valuable in themselves, to be-  
 “ come worthy of, and to be the proper objects of  
 “ divine regard ; and declares men’s personal valu-  
 “ ableness to be the only, and the sole ground of  
 “ their acceptance with God.” \*—Do not, then let us  
 imagine this Gospel *unworthy* of a divine original.

AGAIN, should we attend to the *want of the spread* of the Gospel, the plainest reasons may be assigned : and yet, none owing to the revelation as being unworthy the reception of mankind.

MR. Chubb can account well for the spread of *Mahometanism*. “—This was owing, *says he*, to  
 “ Christianity becoming corrupted in that grand  
 “ principle of all true religion, whether natural or  
 “ revealed, *viz.* the *unity of God* ; and this not on-  
 “ ly became a bar to men’s receiving it, but it gave  
 “ occasion for that great defection from it which  
 “ has so far and so long prevailed in the world,  
 “ commonly called, *Mahometanism*.” *True Gospel*,  
 p. 138.

AND to a like source may we attribute the low reputation Christianity is in, at this day, in many parts of the world : *i. e.* where it has been represented in the *Romish habit*. Than which, it could not have suffered a greater *transmutation*. Who? I ask who, that sincerely loves the *truth*, as it is in Jesus, could wish the spread of Christianity in the dress of Popery! better, ten thousand times better, the darkness of Paganism, than this monstrous production! which renders *inhumane* yea *devilish* all that form their temper and actions upon its principles. This has been the *fertile Mother* of all absurd, and irra-

\* *True Gospel* p. 126.,

tional, enthusiastical and cruel principles; *maxims*, provoking to the INFINITE REASON, dishonourable to JESUS, and a vile debasement of humane nature. How long, O God, how long, shall this *mother of harlots* bewitch and infatuate the earth with her *sorceries*!

AGAIN, let us but consider how it is that many of those behave, who are privileged with this divine revelation *in its purity*! how impure, and uncharitable their tempers! how intemperate, unrighteous, and unchaste their actions!—And then compare with this the idea of the revelation, as a *Talent or Prize* put into men's hands! It will shew how unworthy men are of having the revelation made *universal*! Oh! how great is the weight of guilt?—It will be *more tolerable* for heathen nations in the day of judgment, than for those people who so abuse and pervert this divine privilege. This is the very language of the *Revelation* itself. And the threatnings of the removal of this candlestick, were made good among the *Asiatic Churches*, as Mr. Chubb has observed from the spread of the *Mahometan* delusion.

SHOULD any here object, *that if the Talent is capable of so much abuse as to aggravate the guilt and enhance the punishment of men, it would seem an act of kindness not to put such a Talent at all into the hands of men: for, that the spread of it, is, upon the whole, rather a curse than a blessing to mankind?*—

I SHOULD be inclined thus to answer them; That the objection would indeed be of force, was there any thing in the *revelation* itself that had a *malevolent* tendency, or if any hurtful consequences could be fairly drawn from the principles which it recommends. But when, *on the contrary*, it appears to have the most benign and friendly aspect on society; inculcating sentiments of obligation, every way worthy reasonable nature, and adapted to dignify and exalt it! principles well adapted to render its true disciples the greatest blessings to the world! This will

raise our Ideas of the *Favour* of God, in making such a revelation ; and render it the matter of our most earnest desires, that it might be *universally* known in the humane family. For, notwithstanding men are capable of abusing and corrupting this pure scheme of *truth* and *benevolence*, yet those their abuses do not *at all* alter the value of the revelation. They depreciate it no more, than men's being enabled by the *light of the sun* to commit those enormous vices which they could not commit without it, does depreciate the blessing which the sun is of to our world ; or, than this proves the sun *less* a blessing to mankind, on account of the innumerable evils it affords men light to introduce. Or again,

WILL any say, that because God's *tender mercies* are so universally abused by the children of men, that therefore, it would have been better, upon the whole, that they had not been *over all his works* !—Since then there is nothing in the nature of the revelation itself, but what is worthy of *all acceptation*, every wise and good man would wish its spread, though at the same time he may have the most melancholy views of the unworthy behaviour of those who already have it, in its purity ! And forasmuch as it is calculated to bless mankind, their perverting the design of it, or neglecting its intention, and so inhancing their guilt, will no way depreciate the *excellency* of the talent.

WE should, from the objection, be even unable to vindicate God's *wisdom* and *goodness* in giving such a creature as *man* a being ; who is endowed with reasonable powers and faculties, capable either of *great improvement*, or of inconceivably great *perversion* and *abuse* ; in the last of which cases, his obnoxiousness to evil arises in proportion.—

BUT on the other hand, as the *best* things seem capable of the *greatest* abuse, so the horrid corruptions and depravations of pure Christianity can be no arguments of its want of excellency.

MR.

MR. *Chubb* has given us a very rational account of the Gospel's not being *universally received* at its first publication.\* I shall chuse to transcribe one paragraph from him.

“ AND surely if every reader would but consider  
 “ how many *difficulties* it had to encounter with, and  
 “ how many kinds of *opposition* were likely to be  
 “ made to it, he would not be surprized to find that  
 “ it made no greater progress than it did. For as  
 “ the Gospel of Christ is an address to men as *free*  
 “ beings, which have the direction of their own  
 “ actions, and as such it must be left to every man's  
 “ *choice*, whether he would *bear*, or whether he  
 “ would *forbear*; whether he would *attend* to it, or  
 “ set his *face* against it: so consequently it could not  
 “ be *forced* upon the world, but must make its way  
 “ by mere dint of *reason* and strength of *argument*.  
 “ Indeed the *miraculous* power which attended the  
 “ Gospel at its first publication, was designed to  
 “ *alarm* the world, and to call in men's serious *at-*  
 “ *tention* to what was kindly offered to them, and to  
 “ *stamp a DIVINE character upon it*; and upon ma-  
 “ ny it had its intended effect. But then with mul-  
 “ titudes of others the case was otherwise; men  
 “ found out ways to take off the *force* of this alarm,  
 “ by ascribing that power to *other causes*, and the  
 “ like; so that the generality of men were so far  
 “ from being brought over to the Gospel of Christ,  
 “ that on the contrary, they made *great opposition* to  
 “ it—*p. 122, 123.*” the grounds of which he after-  
 wards particularly considers.

IT will then be proper to put this question, Whether a divine revelation *could* be made *universal*? And it is plain, from what Mr. *Chubb* has said, from the make of man, from the circumstances of the world, as well as from the nature of the thing, that a divine revelation, attested by miracles, *could not be universal*. And not only so, but the mission of Jesus, as a *man*

\* See his True Gospel, from *p. 122* to *139*.

*sent of God*, who taught the most excellent doctrine, and died in attestation of it, in order to reform and save men's souls, this does not seem to admit of being made universal, *i. e. by a divine application made immediately to the mind of every individual of our species.*—But the *credibility* of the divine mission of Jesus, appears to be the result of consummate *wisdom* and *goodness*, *skill* and *prudence*, in which they have seemed to *abound*.—Let then any man shew, how the divine *designation* of Jesus, to be the *sole judge* of men, could have been better made known and attested than it is ; and then, it will be time to suffer our uneasy scruples to arise about the *credibility* of it, but I think not before.

HENCE we may reply to Mr. Chubb's question with great clearness ; since the *want of the universality* attending the making of a divine revelation, is so far from lessening the credibility of it, or being an objection of *less*, or *more*, or *superior* weight to all other circumstances in its favour ; that it is itself a circumstance that must *unavoidably* attend a divine revelation.

AND to assert that miracles at farthest arise to a *low degree* of probability will appear a groundless assertion, if we are allowed to argue from *analogy*, as Mr. Chubb has done.

GOD would not send a person in his own name, as authorized by him to be the judge of quick and dead, and not vouchsafe such testimonials of power and wisdom that would demonstrate his being invested with such a commission. To suppose this, would be worse than to suppose God to permit men to deceive one another ; for, it would prove him defective either in wisdom or goodness, or both.—But if God has imparted so much power as was requisite to support his mission and character, whom he had thus authorized, then the miracles must rise above a *low probability*, as being plenary testimonies or seals of his mission.

NOR

NOR should this be wondered at, arguing from *analogy* ; forasmuch as the light of nature derives its evidence, concerning God, from the operations of his hands : And therefore he is said, *not to leave himself without witness, in that he does good, and gives men rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.*—Men would not be able to form any notions of God, but as they are led by his works of creation and providence : it will therefore appear requisite, that *more particular, or extraordinary* revelations of his will and purpose, should be attested by *external* evidence, suitable to the nature and design of such revelations.—And forasmuch as this is reported to be the case, there is an *high*, if not the *highest* degree of probability, that such revelations are divine.

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## A P P E N D I X.

AS an *Appendix* to what I have offered, I would humbly recommend to the consideration of Mr. CHUBB, and of all those who may have any *vague* or *indeterminate* Ideas of miracles, those *Queries* which are put by the ingenious Dr. GEO. TURNBULL, in his *Philosophical Enquiry concerning the Connexion, &c.* which I beg leave to transcribe.

“ QUERY I. Whether samples of a certain power, do not prove that power : Or if any thing else is necessary to prove a certain power, besides samples of that power : samples analogous in kind, and proportioned in quantity or moment ?

AND in consequence of this, Whether samples of a power to raise the dead, do not prove a power to raise the dead ; and whether samples of a power to deliver

deliver from all kind of diseases and infirmities, do not prove a power to deliver from all kind of diseases and infirmities; and whether samples of power to confer certain qualities and blessings, do not prove power to confer these qualities and blessings?

QUERY II. Whether the principal if not all the doctrines of CHRIST, are not assertions of his having power to raise the dead, and deliver from miseries; and confer blessings; to deliver from such kind of miseries, and confer such kind of blessings as his works were proper and natural samples or experiments of? and what sample, or samples are wanting to make the evidence of his having any power he claimed by his doctrines, full and compleat?

QUERY III. Whether it is more natural and reasonable to think, that God would controul the power of any *being* who pretended a mission from him, which he had not; and not suffer him to produce all the extraordinary works he appealed to as signs of the divine mission and approbation? Or that God would let one appeal to him for his approbation; and give all the evidences and signs of it, to which he appeals as proofs, without any check or controul; full samples of all the power and knowledge he pretended to as a divine missionary? Which of these two conclusions is most consonant to our notions of order and wise administration; our natural conceptions of GOD; and to what we know of the divine government of the natural or moral world?

QUERY IV. Whether an uninterrupted course of honesty, goodness, faithfulness, and benevolence, be not sufficient to create trust? and whether there was any thing in the conduct of JESUS CHRIST, that could beget diffidence and mistrust; or any thing wanting to put his honesty, sincerity, and good intention beyond all doubt?

QUERY V. Which of the doctrines of our SAVIOUR has not a direct tendency, and powerful influence, to excite and encourage to the practice of piety and virtue ; and what is wanting to render the doctrine of our SAVIOUR, a compleat system of religion and morality, in point of precepts, motives, or means : what in point of duty, that reason does not demonstrate to be a duty ; what in point of motive, that it is not in itself probable though not certain ; or what in respect of means that it is not fit and proper in the nature of things, to improve and promote virtue and goodness to the highest degree of perfection humane nature is capable of ?

QUERY VI. Whether therefore abstracting from the truth of Christianity, a better public doctrine can be devised ; whether mankind would live more comfortably and virtuously without the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments, and the other motives Christianity furnisheth to the practice of benevolence and righteousness ; and consequently, whether *it is a kind office to mankind to endeavour to weaken that belief ; or whether it is not the part of a good member of society, and an honest man, to consider well before he publishes to the world his singular notions, whether the promulgating them may not have a bad effect ; contribute to lessen the regard to virtue, or at least the restraints from vice ?*

QUERY VII. Whether the works which were performed by JESUS CHRIST to evince the truth of the doctrines he taught, are not a natural, proper, and full proof of their truth in the strictest and most philosophical sense of a proof or evidence ; since his works bear the same relation to his doctrines, as signs or samples of their truth, that any experiments in philosophy bear to the conclusions justly inferred from them ; or in other words, since, for instance,

K

they

they are signs of their truth in the same sense that experiments or samples of gravity or elasticity, are signs of the reality of these properties?

QUERY VIII. Whether that kind of proof or evidence can be said to be above the reach of any one, upon which even the lowest and most ignorant of mankind daily reason and act in many instances: and whether all degrees of men do not reason and act every day upon the evidence or proof, which signs and samples afford of that quality, natural or moral, of which they are signs and samples?

THE evidence therefore upon which the truth of Christianity depends, is at the same time a strictly philosophical unexceptionable evidence, and an evidence that is obvious to every capacity, nay, familiar to every one."

THE substantial ground on which these Queries are put, and the excellent sense they contain, as demanding the regard of every honest, accurate, and impartial enquirer after truth, was the motive to my transcribing them, and when they are soberly discussed, and fairly set aside as having no weight or importance in them, it will be time enough for me to withdraw my regard to the evidence of miracles.

*F I N I S.*







